

In Stephen Covey's book *First Things First*, he describes a story that one of his associates experienced in a seminar.

This story has been used and referenced by many, because it's a great analogy for how to live a more balanced life.

Put the big rocks in first

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students, and to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget.

In the middle of the lecture the presenter pulled out a wide-mouth jar from under the table and placed it on top. He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar.

After filling the jar to the top with rocks he asked, "Is the jar full?"

People could see that no more rocks would fit, so they replied, "Yes!"

"Not so fast," he cautioned. He then got some gravel from under the table and added it to the jar, filling the space between the rocks. Again, he asked, "Is the jar full?"

This time the students replied, "Probably not."

"Good," he replied. Next he reached under and brought up a bucket of sand and dumped it into the jar filling the spaces between the rocks and the gravel. Once again he asked, "Is the jar full?"

"NO!" the students shouted.

Finally, he grabbed a pitcher of water and filled the jar completely, asking the students what they could learn from that illustration.

One of the participants answered, "If you work at it, you can always fit more into your life."

"No," said the presenter. "The point is, if you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."

Out of all the activities and commitments you have going on in your life – personal and business – which ones are the big rocks?

More importantly, are you making sure that they are going into the jar first?